

# 2019 STRATEGIC PLAN

**City Council and Senior Leadership Team**  
**City of Ankeny, Iowa**



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## INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Ankeny, Iowa is a thriving and rapidly growing community of approximately 65,000 population and is one of the principal municipalities in the Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA metropolitan statistical area. Located astride Interstate 35, immediately north of Des Moines, many consider Ankeny to be the most livable city in Iowa. The local economy is centered on education and health care services; finance, insurance and real estate; retail; and professional services. Large private sector employers include Deere & Company, Casey's General Stores, Perishable Distributors of Iowa, Ltd., B&G Foods North America, and Purfoods. Ankeny is often recognized for the quality of its parks, recreation, and athletic facilities and programs. The city has two major sports complexes, an extensive trail system, two aquatic centers, a top-notch golf course, and a recently opened new library.

Organized under a Mayor/Council/Manager form of government, the Mayor and five members of the City Council are accountable to the electorate and serve as the governing body of the City, setting policy and ensuring the effective delivery of public services. The City Council directly appoints the principal administrative officers of the City - including the City Manager, City Attorney, and City Clerk – and establishes overall policies to guide these officials in the administration of the municipal government's service delivery programs. The City Manager serves as the chief administrative officer of the municipal government and directly hires and supervises the Directors of various city departments.

The city government provides a range of traditional local government services including Police, Fire, Public Works, Utilities, and Library. Other departments include Planning and Building, Economic Development, Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology, and Communications. For fiscal year 2020, the combined funds operating and capital budgets total just over \$101 million.

City leaders have long recognized the value of engagement of both the City Council and senior staff team in a deliberate, thoughtful, and collaborative approach to strategic planning and priority-setting. For the 2019 strategic planning process, Baker Tilly Virchow Krause (Baker Tilly), along with the Azimuth Group, Inc. (AGI), was retained by the City to support the planning, facilitation, and documentation of an intensive strategic planning process to create a refreshed strategic plan to guide decision making regarding such matters as growth and development, continuity of high-quality city service delivery, and the responsible management of the municipal enterprise and its resources.

In preparation for the strategic planning process, the project consultants conducted a series of individual interviews with the Mayor, each member of the City Council, the City Manager, Assistant City Manager, Administrative Services Director, and each Department Director.



Working from a prepared set of questions, as well as the results on an online pre-interview survey, the consultants engaged both elected and appointed leaders in a dialog about the status of the current strategic plan, their perception of the continuing validity of the City’s Vision, Mission and Strategic Goals, and their suggestions for improving the City Council’s strategic planning process. The consulting team also sought input on the specific issues and challenges the City of Ankeny faces today that may have significant implications for its future. The table below summarizes the feedback received. Note that these notes are a representative sample of the input provided and not necessarily an exhaustive listing.

Elected Official Perspectives	Management Perspectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The current statements of Vision and Mission are seen as appropriate and relevant to the City of Ankeny today, and there is no particular need or interest in modifying them.</li> <li>• Similarly, the four existing goals are also seen as valid, high-level descriptors of what the key strategic goals of the City of Ankeny needs to accomplish. While individual projects or tasks listed under each of the four goals have been completed, the goals themselves remain important.</li> <li>• The Mayor and Council are generally well-aligned with one another from a priorities perspective. This year’s planning process will likely reaffirm the main goals and allow the Council to demonstrate “buy-in” to those shared goals.</li> <li>• Some of the details of the existing plan need to be tweaked or refreshed in light of the progress made.</li> <li>• The “chemistry” among the members of the Council could improve. It is often difficult to have meaningful public conversations/dialog about important topics. Some Council members feel that decisions can be rushed and that more work sessions would be helpful.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The key elements of the current strategic plan – Vision, Mission, Goals – remain relevant. No need for wholesale change or redirection of the plan.</li> <li>• The maintenance of the historic small town/hometown feel of Ankeny is increasingly difficult as the community grows. Most directors believe that their departments are under-staffed to meet increasing service demands.</li> <li>• The City Manager has implemented strong, conservative financial management and this is one of the City’s real strengths.</li> <li>• City of Ankeny staff is strong, professional, service-oriented, problem solvers.</li> <li>• Staff members feel that they are part of a solid, collaborative management team.</li> <li>• Significant efforts to upgrade the City’s development codes, rules, and regulations have been undertaken, and the implementation of those changes has produced some concerns in the local development community. There are opportunities to streamline development processes.</li> <li>• The City has been investing time and energy on the improvement of communications efforts, both internal and external.</li> <li>• Specific issues noted in the staff interviews include:</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The strategic plan needs to be a “map” to stay on track throughout the year, not just at budget time.</li> <li>• As Ankeny has grown, its importance and impact on the region have also increased. Ankeny wants to be seen as a good regional partner with other public and private entities.</li> <li>• Strengthening/modernizing the City’s development codes and standards has resulted in some push-back from the development community. Some Council members feel that the City is not as development-friendly as it once was.</li> <li>• Spending some time on governance issues and clarification of the respective roles and responsibilities of elected officials and appointed staff could be useful.</li> <li>• In addition to the above, specific strategic issues and concerns identified by the City’s elected officials include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Maintaining service levels and the “hometown feel” of Ankeny during a period of rapid growth. Staffing levels may need to be increased more aggressively.</li> <li>○ Examination and discussion of the City’s participation in regional transit and the existing imbalance of revenues collected and the utilization of the system by Ankeny residents.</li> <li>○ Ankeny’s role in the governance of the regional water system needs to be strengthened.</li> <li>○ Concentrated effort on the community’s appearance is needed.</li> <li>○ There is a need for increased funding for street maintenance and repair.</li> <li>○ Growth in multi-family development.</li> <li>○ Need for high-quality office development.</li> <li>○ Development in Uptown Ankeny and along Ankeny Boulevard should be incentivized to capitalize on the community’s heritage.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Need for improvement of the process for selling pool passes.</li> <li>○ Increasing demand for indoor gym space and practice field availability for organized team sports.</li> <li>○ Expansion of the City’s hike and bike trails and connectivity to the regional system.</li> <li>○ Street system maintenance and repair.</li> <li>○ Stormwater system improvements in light of last year's flooding.</li> <li>○ There are opportunities to improve the City’s utilization of technology to “do things smarter.” Examples given include asset management, complaint tracking, snow route optimization, and issuing building permits.</li> <li>○ Strengthen Ankeny’s role in the regional water system.</li> <li>○ DART service level/cost imbalance.</li> <li>○ Traffic congestion is a growing concern.</li> <li>○ Development of water conservation program.</li> <li>○ Employee recruitment and retention.</li> <li>○ Funding plan for renewal/replacement in 20-30 years of the new infrastructure that is being added now.</li> <li>○ Meeting future demands for indoor recreation space and athletic fields.</li> <li>○ Development of mental/emotional health support system for public safety employees.</li> <li>○ Explore stronger collaboration with Des Moines Area Community College public safety-related programs.</li> </ul>
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Elected Official Perspectives	Management Perspectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Focus on tourism, especially bicycle-oriented events, can be strengthened.</li><li>○ Revenue diversification through improving the balance between residential and commercial valuations and re-examination of the local option sales tax.</li><li>○ Stormwater management and sewer backups were revealed through a recent flooding event.</li><li>○ Establishment of implementation priorities of the City's Comprehensive Plan and Park Master Plan.</li><li>○ Continued attention to the improvement of public communication and community engagement.</li></ul>	



## PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

Effective strategic planning involves the gathering, sorting, and prioritizing the best thinking of the City of Ankeny’s policymakers and senior managers, focused on the core purposes of the organization and the essential attributes of strategic success. The City of Ankeny’s 2019 strategic planning efforts produced a framework to guide the decisions of both elected leaders and managers over the next five years and beyond.

The elements of that strategic framework include:

- An examination of the current operational environment and the identification of critical external forces and trends that influence and impact the City of Ankeny’s ability to meet citizen expectations.
- Assessment of the municipal organization’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
- Updated statements of vision and mission.
- Identification of the key attributes or indicators of future success.
- Development and prioritization of seven strategic goals around which critical policy decisions can be evaluated and important organizational and operational activities can be managed.
- Identification of a set of 32 specific operational objectives spread across the seven goals that represent a “to-do” list of activities and programs to undertake over the next several years.

Strategic planning is a product of strategic thinking, which should occur not only at periodic planning sessions such as the one just completed but continuously, as has been the practice of the City of Ankeny. Good planning involves the gathering, sorting, and prioritizing the best thinking of Ankeny’s elected policy leaders and appointed managers to effectively address the issues that challenge the City today and, more importantly, those that will challenge the City tomorrow. The strategic planning process, therefore, was designed as an exercise in collective foresight. Participants sought to clarify what success looks like for Ankeny in light of the conditions you face today, expect in the future, and where you want to lead the organization and the community.

Throughout the planning cycle, both the City Council and senior staff members – both separately and collectively - endeavored to work at the **strategic**, rather than the operational level of municipal government. The main goal of the planning process was to identify the **What** rather than the **How** of future city services, organization, and operations. Accordingly, the process was designed to allowed the City’s elected officials and senior staff to collaborate on the creation of an updated Ankeny strategic plan that articulates broad policy guidance regarding the desired



outcomes/results while also ensuring that the city staff will have the subsequent opportunity to “flesh-out” more specific action plans, timelines, and budgets to achieve the Council’s stated policy goals.

With this in mind, activities completed throughout three separate planning workshops enabled an open discussion of the City’s current strengths and weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and forging of a consensus around the highest order priorities for the municipal government organization to address over the next five or more years. These priorities, in turn, establish the foundation for defining more specific action steps, resource plans (budgets), and performance measures for the city staff to provide to the Council. The results of the strategic planning process provide a unifying frame of reference to guide daily policy and operating decisions, organizational structures, and governance.

The activities included within the 2019 Strategic Planning process for the City of Ankeny included the following:

1. ***Completion of an initial project kickoff conference*** with the City Manager and key members of his staff to confirm the planning project scope, approach, participants, timing, and deliverables.
2. ***Collection and review of various background materials and data***, including the current strategic plan, budgets, organizational charts, community data, and the like.
3. ***Administration of an online questionnaire with expected interview participants*** to gather pertinent information on current priorities, issues, opportunities, and constraints facing the City of Ankeny in advance of the interview process.
4. ***Completion of individual interviews*** with the Mayor, each member of the City Council, the City Manager, Assistant City Manager, Administrative Services Director, and all city department directors.
5. ***Design, facilitation, and documentation of three strategic planning workshops***, as follows:
  - a. An environmental scanning and visioning workshop with the Mayor, Council, and the City’s Executive Team comprised the City Manager, Assistant City Manager, and Administrative Services Director.
  - b. A full-day planning and initial goal-setting workshop with the Executive Team and Department Directors.
  - c. A second half-day planning workshop with the Mayor, Council, and Executive Team to review the results of the management goal-setting workshop, to validate and revise the current vision and mission statements of the City and to set and prioritize strategic goals.





6. ***Documentation of the results of the strategic planning process*** in a comprehensive written report including the consolidation of the results obtained in the three planning workshops, the development of an updated set of goals and objectives for the City of Ankeny, the preparation of a graphical strategy map, and the creation of a strategic plan matrix of goals, objectives, initiatives, targeted due dates and management accountabilities.

The balance of this report presents in detail the results of the above-described activities.



## ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN/CONTEXT MAP

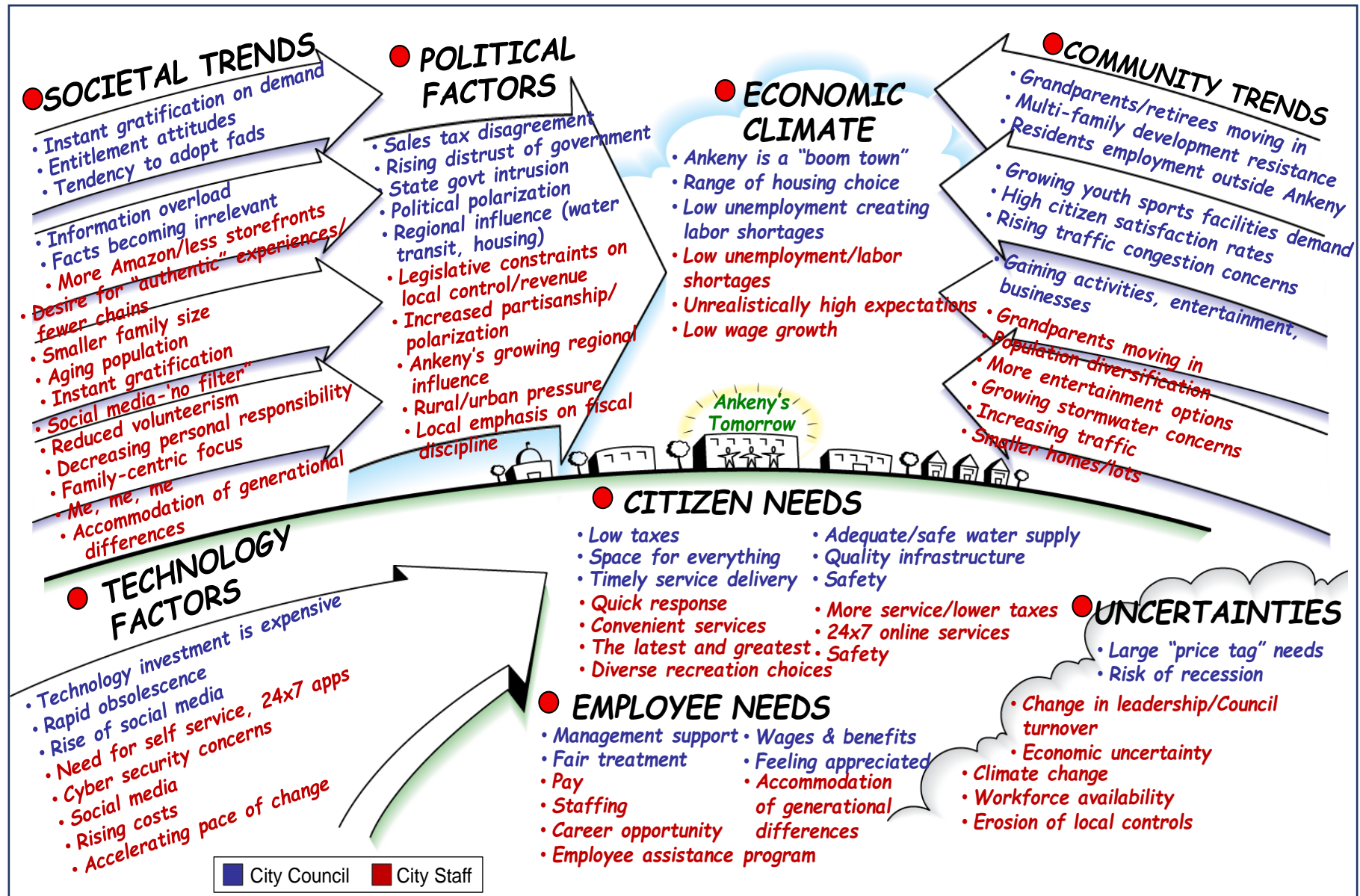
Strategic planning cannot occur in a vacuum. Instead, it must be based on a clear understanding of the environment within which the strategy will be carried out. The Mayor and City Council Members, as well as the City Manager and senior staff members, participated in structured exercises to describe the current external conditions shaping the environment in which the City of Ankeny currently operates. Achievement of a consensus about the nature of the operating environment enables members of the City's leadership to effectively understand, plan, and deliver services in the public interest.

This exercise focused the thinking of participants on the following:

- Societal trends
- Community trends
- Political factors
- Economic climate
- Technology factors
- Citizen needs
- Employee needs
- Uncertainties

In addition to documenting these important factors and trends that might impact the community's future, planning process participants engaged in a productive dialog about the significance of these trends and factors for the Ankeny community and their impact on the city government's ability to deliver services and programs the public desires today and into the future.

The result of this environmental scan, in the form of a graphical context map consolidating the input of both City Council and staff, is shown on the following page. The blue text reflects City Council input, red text the city staff view.





## STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS (SWOT) ANALYSIS

Whereas the environmental scan and context mapping exercise focused on external conditions, the SWOT analysis required workshop participants to critically and constructively consider attributes of the City of Ankeny as a community and a service delivery organization.

- **Strengths** are those assets and capabilities currently available within the community and the organization that can be leveraged to achieve desired results.
- **Weaknesses** are those problem areas or aspects of the government organization and, in some cases, the community at large, that stand in the way of strategic success and must be overcome to achieve optimal results.
- **Threats** are current or potential future external events that, if unmitigated, have the potential to impair the City's ability to realize its potential. These may be political, economic, societal, natural, or man-made in nature.
- **Opportunities** are future-focused conditions that can, if properly understood, be captured to obtain a strategic advantage through capitalizing on strengths, overcoming weaknesses, and mitigating threats.

The SWOT matrix on the following page displays the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats identified by Ankeny's elected and appointed leadership team, as amended by the City Council in the final planning workshop. Blue text in each quadrant shows the City Council's perspective, red text denotes the city staff perspective.



## ● STRENGTHS

- |   |  |   |                          |
|---|--|---|--------------------------|
| + | Strong financial position                | + | Hometown feel            |
| + | High service levels                      | + | Capable staff            |
| + | Trusted elected officials                | + | Efficiency               |
| + | Transparency                             | + | Collaborative culture    |
| + | Regional leadership                      | + | Pay study implementation |
| + | Strong, competent staff                  | + | Positive reputation      |
| + | Efficiency                               | + | Strong fiscal position   |
| + | Teamwork                                 | + | Strategic location       |
| + | Council dynamics                         | + | Public schools           |
| + | Good alignment between Council and staff | + | Geographic location      |
|   |  | + | Commitment to citizens   |
|   |  | + | Great representation     |
|   |  | + | Community support        |

## ● OPPORTUNITIES

- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| ○ | Regionalize Des Moines Water Works          | ○ | Revenue diversification (LOST)            |
| ○ | Invest in information technology            | ○ | Regional leadership and collaboration     |
| ○ | Manage growth patterns                      | ○ | Improve public communication              |
| ○ | Economic growth                             | ○ | Succession opportunities                  |
| ○ | Optimize facilities, amenities, programming | ○ | Innovate/learn from other cities          |
| ○ | Promote bike tourism                        | ○ | Service consolidation                     |
| ○ | Sustain & grow goodwill                     | ○ | Grow local employment                     |
| ○ | Address changing workforce needs            | ○ | School district collaboration             |
| ○ | Strengthen community events                 | ○ | Regional airport                          |
| ○ | Promote places                              | ○ | Draw businesses into the community fabric |
| ○ | Better communicate value-received for taxes |   |   |

## ● WEAKNESSES

- |   |                                       |   |  |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| ▲ | Council "staying out of the weeds"    | ▲ | Lack of long-term focus                  |
| ▲ | Taking time to work through ideas     | ▲ | Staffing depth                           |
| ▲ | City staffing levels                  | ▲ | Lack of succession planning              |
| ▲ | Limited Council/staff interaction     | ▲ | Internal communication                   |
| ▲ | Communication (internal and external) | ▲ | Emergency capacity                       |
| ▲ | Clarity of project status             | ▲ | Focus on "hometown feel"                 |
|   |                                       | ▲ | Lack of time to think about doing better |

## ● THREATS

- |   |                                 |   |                                   |
|---|---------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| ● | Uninformed public               | ● | Growth                            |
| ● | Entitlement culture             | ● | Social influences                 |
| ● | Infrastructure costs            | ● | Mandates                          |
| ● | Growth rate, type and direction | ● | External funding reliability      |
| ● | Unfunded mandates               | ● | Cyber risk                        |
| ● | State pre-emption               | ● | Recession risk                    |
| ● | Water quality                   | ● | Competition for talent and growth |
| ● | Regional influence              | ● | Water regionalization             |
| ● | Economic downturn               | ● | Severe weather event              |
|   |                                 | ● | Fiscal discipline pressure        |
|   |                                 | ● | Trust in government               |

■ City Council ■ City Staff



In the SWOT analysis, the “Opportunities” section is often the most revealing in terms of the desired future direction of the organization and the community. To identify important Opportunities, the participants considered the important things that need to be achieved to take advantage of the strengths of the organization and community, overcome weaknesses, and mitigate or minimize threats.

The City of Ankeny leaders – both Council and staff - listed 21 individual opportunities, in no order of importance or priority, as follows:

### **City Council**

- Regionalize Des Moines Water Works
- Invest in information technology
- Manage growth patterns
- Economic growth
- Optimize public facilities, amenities, and programming
- Promote bicycle tourism
- Sustain and grow goodwill
- Address changing workforce needs
- Strengthen community events
- Promote places
- Better communicate value received for taxes

### **City Staff**

- Revenue diversification (local option sales tax)
- Regional leadership and collaboration
- Improve public communication
- Succession planning
- Innovate/learn from other cities
- Service consolidation
- Grow local employment
- School district collaboration
- Regional airport
- Draw businesses into the community fabric



## STRUCTURE OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The graphic to the right illustrates the hierarchical structure of the updated Ankeny Strategic Plan. This structure helps define the relationship between strategy development and strategy execution. Strategy development and adoption is the ultimate role of the City Council, whose responsibility is to establish and articulate policy in the interest of the organization and the citizens of Ankeny. It is the Council that sets the overall vision for the City, defines the vision and mission of the organization, and determines the City's top public policy priorities and goals.

The management team, working with and through the City Manager, is accountable for the implementation and accomplishment of the City Council's priorities. They do this through the development and execution of operational action plans, the preparation and recommendation of budgets, and the regular monitoring and reporting of progress concerning the Council's directives.

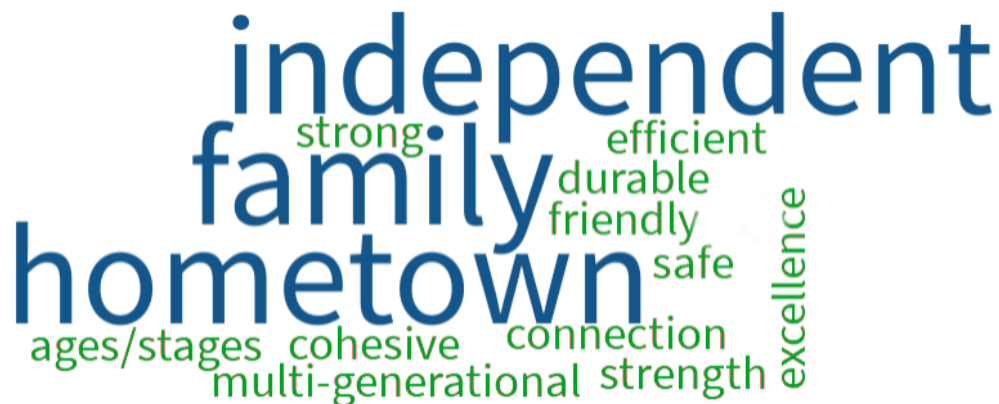




## ANKENY VISION

An organization's **Vision** is aspirational. It defines what the organization wants to be or to achieve. It is an idealized description of the desired future state of the community. Using an anonymous online polling tool, both City Council and staff workshop participants thought about the top three words that best describe their personal vision for the City of Ankeny. The resulting "word clouds" – with words that appeared most frequently shown in larger/bold text, are shown below:

### City Council



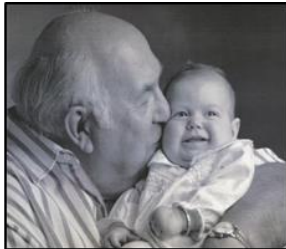
### City Staff



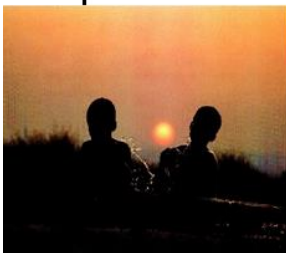




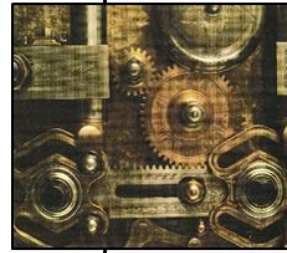
City Council members also completed a structured visioning activity, using photographic imagery to spark conversation regarding their shared vision for Ankeny's future. The results of this visioning activity are shown below:



- Multi-generational community and "lifecycle" families
- Service to all
- New beginnings and future generations
- Preservation and renewal
- Connection between our past and our future
- Hometown feel
- Safe, kid-friendly
- Recreational opportunity
- Future focused
- Helping one another
- Strong base
- Predictability
- Growth
- Overcoming challenges



- Ankeny leads the region
- Independent city
- Efficient government
- Automation drives service delivery costs down
- Coordinated, cohesive, durable
- Teamwork
- "Bringing it all together"





Finally, based on the themes captured through the visioning activities and discussions, and with the input of workshop participants, the following vision statement for the City of Ankeny was developed and adopted by the City Council.

### **ANKENY VISION**

**“Ankeny is a multi-generational hometown with an independent community spirit. Residents enjoy a safe community, an active lifestyle, thriving businesses, and easy connectivity to the region.”**



## MISSION STATEMENT

A **Mission Statement** describes the organization's purpose. It defines the business of the organization and its relationship to its customers. City Council and staff members reviewed the existing mission statement and updated it as follows:

### ANKENY MISSION

**“The Mission of the City of Ankeny is to provide customer-focused, high-quality services and sound fiscal management. By advocating for and engaging our community, we enhance quality of life and protect the community's interests.”**



## EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

At an aspirational level, how will things be different in Ankeny if the updated strategic plan is successful? How should the governing body and senior city management evaluate whether or not the organization is making progress towards its vision and succeeding in its mission?

In their separate workshops, both staff members and City Council identified several key indicators of future success. These indicators are not a substitute for organizational or community performance measures but, instead, are intended to describe – in broad directional terms – what the elected and appointed leaders want to occur over the mid to long term.

### CITY COUNCIL

- Improving citizen survey results
- Improving trends in key indicators of performance
- Service level improvements, especially public safety
- Strong, positive growth patterns and diversification of the tax base
- Improvements in community appearance
- Improved transportation system/regional access
- Successful renewal efforts
- High levels of citizen activity across demographic groups
- Continued strong infrastructure condition
- Growing availability of social, recreational, and artistic opportunities
- Continued strong fiscal performance and stability

### CITY STAFF

- Resident survey results: continued high citizen satisfaction
- Positive comparisons to peer communities
- Improving performance measures
- Improving bond rating
- Tax base growth
- High volume of city employment applications
- Strong employee retention
- Reduction in citizen complaints
- New business startups and business retention/expansion



## CORE VALUES

Organizational **Values** are the fundamental principles that guide how members of the organization conduct themselves while carrying out their mission in pursuit of the overall vision. Together, the values provide an ethical framework for decision-making and action. In the planning workshop conducted with the senior staff of the City of Ankeny, participants brainstormed a set of six core values for the organization.

Working with the six value concepts suggested by the staff, the strategic planning consultant prepared draft definitions for each, as shown below. As with the Vision and Mission statements, these value statements should be reviewed and revised as needed to reflect the intent of the Council and senior staff.

### ANKENY VALUES

**Teamwork** - *We believe that success comes from working together as collaborators and partners, striving daily to earn and sustain the trust of citizens and coworkers alike.*

**Respect** - *We treat each other, our residents, and customers as we expect to be treated, with courtesy and sensitivity to their feelings, rights, and traditions.*

**Quality** - *We hold ourselves to high standards of service excellence, meeting and exceeding the expectations of those we serve.*

**Integrity** - *We are honest, truthful, and ethical in all things.*

**Professionalism** - *We are committed public servants and intentional caretakers of public resources while responsively and reliably meeting our community's needs.*

**Communication** - *We interact with others in an open, respectful, positive, and transparent manner.*



## STRATEGIC GOALS

After systematically scanning the external environment, evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the organization, identifying opportunities and threats, and confirming the City of Ankeny's overall vision and mission, Council and staff participants next turned their attention to the specific areas of organizational focus that they believe likely to have the most significant and positive impacts on the long-range success of the Ankeny community and its municipal government.

To identify these areas of strategic impact for the City of Ankeny, the workshop facilitator applied a technique known as "future pull." The facilitator challenged participants to mentally go forward in time to imagine great success as defined in the City's vision and mission statements. Participants then visualized a situation where the City had achieved its vision by accomplishing its mission while operating within its value framework. They were then asked:

***"Looking back from a position of great success, what, specifically, did you do to achieve that success?"***

Each participant listed concrete action steps that they believe would, if taken, lead the City of Ankeny to that future position of strategic success. They thought about leveraging the identified strengths to overcome weaknesses and how to mitigate threats to create opportunities. They considered what actions would help to drive the accomplishment of the future performance indicators they envisioned for the community and the organization. Many unique ideas were generated and captured on "sticky notes" with each participant describing their proposed action steps. Working together as a group, workshop participants – including both elected officials and staff members - grouped the ideas on a graphical chart to identify and name the common themes that tie the individual contributions together into a coherent concept.

From this collaborative brainstorming exercise, as illustrated in the graphics on the following pages, a total of seven common themes emerged to define the most important strategic goals for the City of Ankeny's future. These are the areas in which the Council and senior staff believe results are required, which will move the community towards its long-term vision.

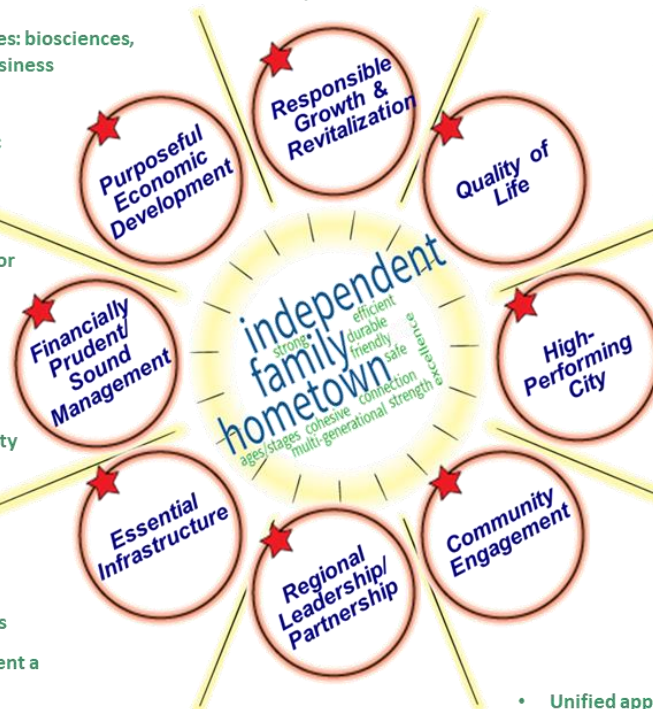




## Strategic Goals & Objectives (City Council perspective)

- Create policy(ies) for public/private partnerships
- Ankeny as a successful business center
- Expand the commercial tax base and job opportunities
- Support the Ankeny Regional Airport's completion of capital improvement projects and development plan
- Continue reputation as a "business-friendly" city that supports economic growth
- Increase the number of targeted businesses: biosciences, logistics, advanced manufacturing, and business services/information technology
- Maintain partnerships between the city, metro business community, and economic development organizations
- Cultivate small business relationships
- Implement specific budgetary and tax goals to hold or reduce property taxes
- Maximize city services at the current tax rate
- Continue to adjust city fees based upon cost recovery, competitiveness in the marketplace and cost of mandates
- Maintain a high performing city team based upon respect, trust, professional accountability and competence
- Evaluate new service or program requests in light of city mission and service value to residents
- Maintain a high level of satisfaction with city services and programs
- Enhance city services and amenities in a financially responsible and responsive manner as the city grows
  - ID major transportation corridors and implement a preservation system
  - Street/road quality
  - Sewer maintenance/improve
  - Traffic flow made workable for ease of movement and safety
  - Resolve public transit stance/offering
  - Transit options
  - Improved/made safe pedestrian and bicycle crossing of roads/high traffic areas
  - Create plans for transit, stormwater, all infrastructure
  - Higher pavement standards – new and repair
  - Better traffic experience

- Implement an Entertainment District policy
- Implemented 2040 Plan with adoption of building standards
- Uptown
- Ankeny Blvd
- NE 36<sup>th</sup> Street
- Density "mix" and locations (manage trends)



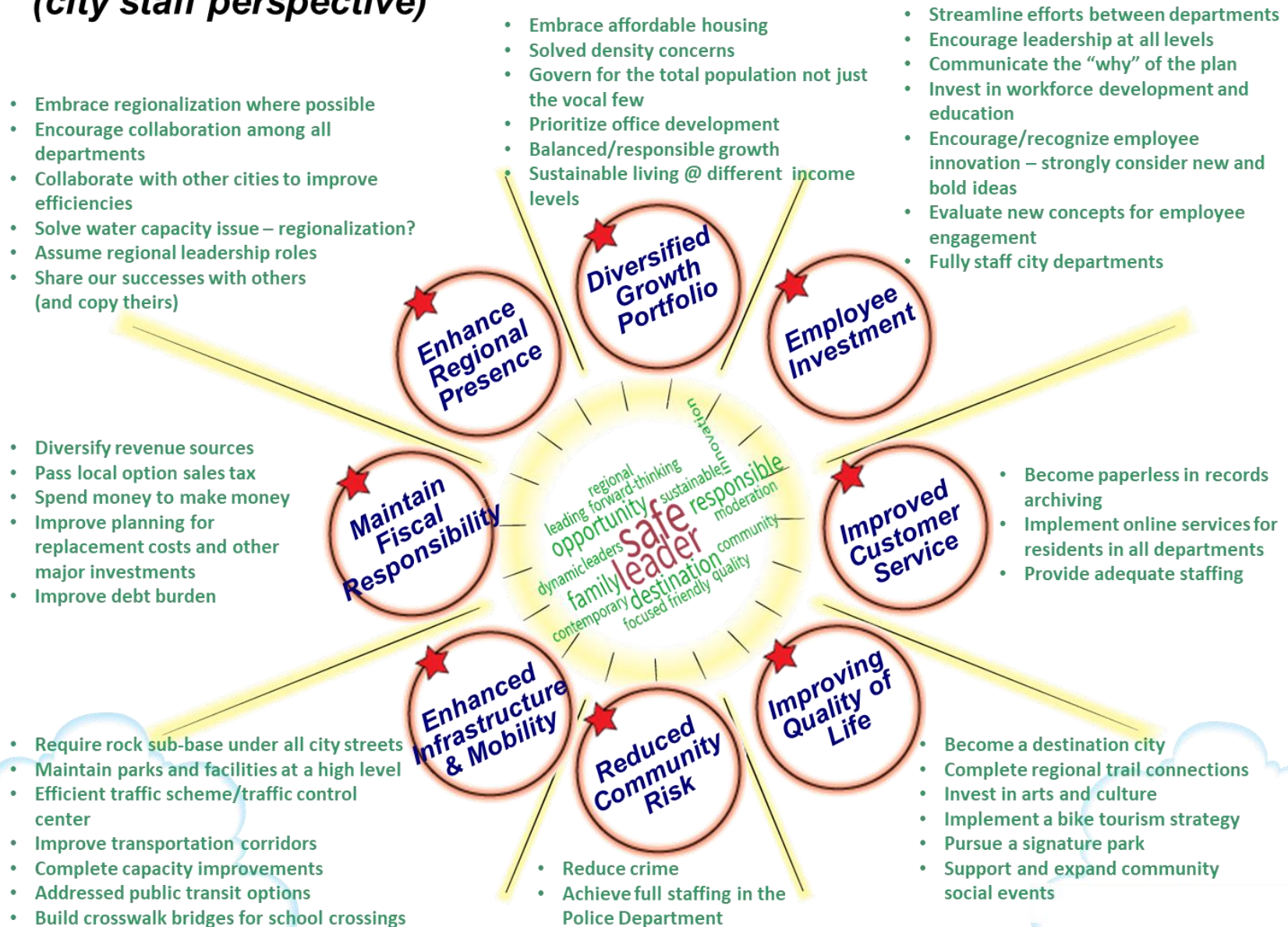
- Become leaders in regional organizations (Council members and staff)
- Engage suburban partners to strategize on regional issues
- Solve our DART issues

- Implementation of Parks study for indoor/outdoor sports facilities
- Implement Park & Facilities Plan (indoor space, outdoor space, senior center, parks)
- Implement priorities in plans – parks, facilities, comprehensive plan 2040
- Signature park (included in Park Plan)
- Indoor sports facility (included in Park Plan)
- Grow and scale traditions (i.e., Christmas tree lighting)
- Master Plan for community art
- Support for community events
- City beautification- trees, public art, etc. – set the example for residents
- Community appearance standards – crackdown on mowing company, personal pride in property
- Enhance pride in public and private spaces – community emphasis (upkeep, vandalism)
- Resolve park deserts
- Solve Neveln Center issue
- More public art
- Automated city services
  - Utility billing, parks and recreation, basic permits, online applications
- Added technology as appropriate, helpful
- Analyze technological opportunities and implement based on ROI and efficiency gained
- 24-hour service citywide
- Police staffing
- Provide needed staffing for public safety
- Hiring bonuses for police (1 or 2 year)
- Retention bonuses for PD – pay back if departure
- Enhance emergency preparedness across the community and city organization
- Provide needed staffing throughout the organization
- Value diversity

- Unified approach to public communications
- Leverage existing tools for communication
- Leverage community outreach team (police) and others
- City/school partnership
- High level of transparency/info sharing with the public
- Communication diversification – move away from only social media (both dissemination and engagement)



## Strategic Goals & Objectives (city staff perspective)







As shown in the preceding illustrations, the city staff and City Council defined very similar sets of goals. These included the following:

### **City Council**

- Responsible growth and revitalization
- Quality of life
- High-performing city
- Community engagement
- Regional leadership/partnership
- Essential infrastructure
- Financially prudent/sound management
- Purposeful economic development

### **City Staff**

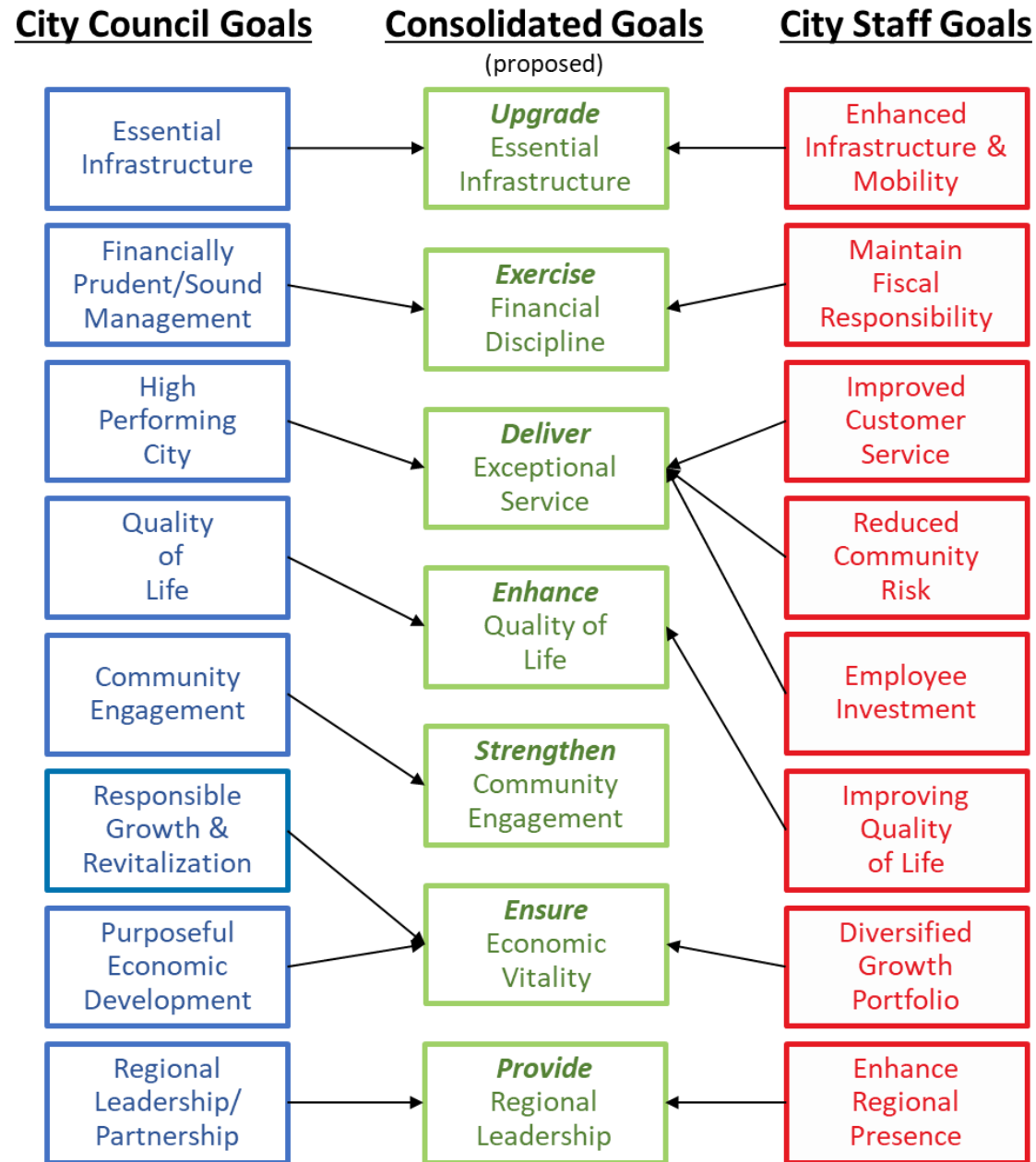
- Diversified growth portfolio
- Employee investment
- Improved customer service
- Improving quality of life
- Reduced community risk
- Enhanced infrastructure and mobility
- Maintained fiscal responsibility
- Enhanced regional presence

The workshop facilitator then combined these separate goal listings into a common framework, as shown on the following page, to produce the following set of strategic goals.

## **STRATEGIC GOALS**

(consolidated)

- **Upgrade Essential Infrastructure**
- **Exercise Financial Discipline**
- **Deliver Exceptional Service**
- **Enhance Quality of Life**
- **Strengthen Community Engagement**
- **Ensure Economic Vitality**
- **Provide Regional Leadership**





## OPERATING OBJECTIVES

Whereas **strategic goals** reflect the major policy priorities of the City Council, **strategic objectives** constitute the specific projects, programs, or actions needed to achieve each goal. After the workshop, the planning process facilitator worked to capture the intent of the participants as revealed through discussion of the strategic goals and, in several instances, combined, consolidated and re-phrased some of the suggested action steps to create a workable set of strategic objectives for the City's implementation over the mid to long-term. Analysis of the workshop results resulted in a set of 32 individual operating objectives supporting the seven strategic goals, as follows:

### **1. Upgrade Essential Infrastructure**

*Ankeny's public infrastructure is thoughtfully planned, safely operated, regionally connected, and systematically maintained.*

- 1.1 – Implement stormwater, streets, and utility improvement plans.
- 1.2 – Improve major transportation corridors.
- 1.3 – Improve pedestrian and bicycle crossings.
- 1.4 – Reduce traffic congestion.
- 1.5 – Maintain parks and facilities at a high level.
- 1.6 – Address long-term public transit needs.

### **2. Exercise Financial Discipline**

*We are effective stewards of the public resources entrusted to our care and take seriously our obligation to provide services that responsibly balance service levels and costs.*

- 2.1 – Maximize city services at the current tax rate.
- 2.2 – Diversify revenue sources.
- 2.3 – Actively manage city fees for cost recovery, competitiveness, and mandates.
- 2.4 – Align new service or program budgets to the City's mission and citizen value.
- 2.5 – Reduce the City's debt burden.
- 2.6 – Improve long-range planning for replacement costs and major investments.



**3. Deliver Exceptional Service**

*Ankeny's high-quality public services are responsive to our citizen's needs, readily accessible, courteously delivered, and professionally managed.*

- 3.1 – Attract and retain a high-performing, diverse, and competent city staff team.
- 3.2 – Provide sufficient staffing to achieve desired service levels.
- 3.3 – Leverage technology to improve public access to city services.
- 3.4 – Strengthen collaboration between city departments.
- 3.5 – Maintain high citizen satisfaction ratings.

**4. Enhance Quality of Life**

*Ankeny is renowned for its hometown feel, safe and livable neighborhoods, active lifestyle, and attractive public spaces in which to play, relax, and learn.*

- 4.1 – Implement the Parks & Facilities master plans.
- 4.2 – Complete and open the Ankeny Senior Community Center.
- 4.3 – Develop a master plan for public art.
- 4.4 – Grow and expand community traditions and events.
- 4.5 – Enhance pride in both public and private spaces.
- 4.6 – Become a destination city.

**5. Strengthen Community Engagement**

*Ankeny is governed openly and transparently, building and sustaining trust through the inclusion and involvement of a well-informed citizenry.*

- 5.1 – Optimize the use of communication tools and techniques
- 5.2 – Sustain and grow the City/School partnership.

**6. Ensure Economic Vitality**

*Ankeny's economy is both robust and resilient, carefully blending diverse residential and commercial development for generational sustainability.*

- 6.1 – Practice purposeful economic development.
- 6.2 – Responsibly guide community growth and revitalization.
- 6.3 – Expand the commercial tax base and job opportunities.
- 6.4 – Diversify the range of housing choices.



**7. Provide Regional Leadership**

*Elected and appointed officials of the City of Ankeny actively participate in leading public interest organizations, adopting and advocating for policies that advance the interests of our citizens, the region and the state.*

7.1 – Assume leadership roles in key regional government organizations.

7.2 – Support regional initiatives benefitting Ankeny.

7.3 – Collaborate with other suburban communities.



## STRATEGY MAP

A strategy map is a simple graphical depiction of the City of Ankeny's strategic plan in terms of its vision, mission, values, strategic goals, and key objectives. It serves as a quick reference guide to the plan and is a useful tool for organizing and aligning departmental business plans, objectives, and resources in support of the overall strategy. The map summarizing the City of Ankeny's strategy is shown on the following page.



### OUR VISION

Ankeny is a multi-generational hometown with an independent community spirit. Residents enjoy a safe community, an active lifestyle, thriving businesses, and easy connectivity to the region.

### OUR MISSION

The mission of the City of Ankeny is to provide customer-focused, high-quality services and sound fiscal management. By advocating for and engaging our community, we enhance quality of life and protect the community's interests.

### OUR VALUES

Teamwork  
Respect  
Quality  
Integrity  
Professionalism  
Communication

## OUR GOALS

**1 Upgrade Essential Infrastructure**

**2 Exercise Financial Discipline**

**3 Deliver Exceptional Service**

**4 Enhance Quality of Life**

**5 Strengthen Community Engagement**

**6 Ensure Economic Vitality**

**7 Provide Regional Leadership**

## OUR STRATEGY

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- 6.4 – Diversify the range of housing choices.

- 7.1 – Assume leadership roles in key regional government organizations.
- 7.2 – Support regional initiatives benefitting Ankeny.
- 7.3 – Collaborate with other suburban communities.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

The strategic planning process is an important milestone in the City of Ankeny's continued focus on long-term strategic thinking, planning, and management. The time, thought, and effort invested by both policymakers and appointed professionals allowed them to think creatively about the possibilities for the community that go well beyond the routine meeting-to-meeting, tactical decision-making routine. The significance of the commitment of resources to this effort is commendable, and the results have established a foundation for future improvement.

**RECOMMENDATION** *Assign the staff to build-out the supporting operating details required to link the strategic goals and objectives to the City's operational and capital planning and budgeting processes.*

The City Council, acting in its role as policy leaders, should take lead responsibility for **strategy formulation**. In turn, the City Manager in the role of the City's chief executive officer should have the primary responsibility for **strategy execution**. Just as policy is the province of the Council and administration is the province of the staff, so it is with strategy. The Council sets strategic priorities, defines how their accomplishment will be measured, and then holds management accountable for the effective execution. The City should consider the creation of a strategy implementation team consisting of a representative cross-section of staff members across the organization, drawn primarily from the senior and middle management levels of each department. This implementation team should take responsibility for the identification of specific operational initiatives and tasks necessary for the accomplishment of the plan's objectives. While every department may not be required to produce individual initiatives for every one of the 32 objectives, each should carefully assess those objectives and determine which of them will require some level of effort. Additionally, each objective should be assigned an accountable owner tasked with leading cross-functional internal teams assigned to the accomplishment of the objective, along with a target date for completion. Finally, the implementation teams should be assigned to develop a set of strategic performance indicators and targets to be used in the measurement, monitoring, and reporting of progress to the organization, the Council and the community.





**RECOMMENDATION** *Continue the practice of regular, annual process of strategic planning closely linked to the budget process.*

Going forward, the Mayor, Council, and staff should continue the existing practice of collaborative strategic planning and management. An annual planning retreat – with or without an outside facilitator - should be used to evaluate progress made on objectives and supporting initiatives established for the year, to review current and projected financial conditions and to consider needed updates to the strategic goals, objectives, and priorities.

The results of the annual planning retreat and any guidance provided by the City Council should become the foundation for the staff's development of the yearly budget and supporting departmental operating plans, performance measures, and targets.

**RECOMMENDATION** *Adopt tools and processes to track and report results, identify further improvement opportunities, and document outcomes.*

Once the Council adopts the City's strategy, that strategy becomes the documented policy of the governing body and the City Manager. In some cases, other appointed officials are accountable for the execution of the plan as it applies to their areas of responsibility. The Council should focus more on the desired outcomes/results they expect the city government to achieve and less on the particular means/tactics by which those results are obtained, subject to limitations and guidelines established by the Council and law.

By ensuring that strategic goal attainment and operating results are measured and reported by management to the Council and the general public, an improved focus on accountability for results is created and can foster a climate of confidence and trust between elected officials and appointed staff.